

Three Spiritual Laws

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[0:00] 1. Galatians 5 verse 13!

1. 1. 1. 1. 2. 4. 5. 5. 6. 6. 7.

7. 8. 8. 9. 9. 10. 10. 10. 11. 11. 12.

12. 12. 12. 13. 14. 14. 15. 16. 16. 16. 16.

16. 16. 16. 16. 16. 16. spiritual principles that we can see given to us in the scriptures and in this passage.

[1:33] Three spiritual laws that we ought to see evident amongst the people of God, at work within the lives and conduct of God's people today. And what the Lord is calling us to.

And firstly, number one, liberty. Liberty, verse 13. For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty. Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh.

The church of God should be marked by the people of God having an evident liberty. An evident liberty. We are called unto this. A little earlier in verse 1, Paul says, Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

And be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage. As believers, we're meant to engage and operate under this spiritual law of liberty.

We see it referred to as a law in James 1 verse 25, where it says, But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

[2:45] The word of God is called a law, the law of liberty. I know Wednesday, someone was referring to the scriptures as being the law of God. There is the law that we're free from, but there is the law that we still operate within.

And one of those laws, as I put it to you, is that perfect law of liberty. Now, Friday night, I went out and visited someone who invited us to tea.

They served wine at the table. They were drinking wine. And Julie and I partook of that wine. Mind you, the wine we partook of was not alcoholic.

Because personally, I have a reservation about drinking wine. But this brother and sister did not have that same reservation. Drinking wine is something where, personally, I would not do so.

And I'd exhort others to be wary of wine, alcoholic wine. But this is an area of liberty.

[3:50] It's an area of liberty. The Lord does not will that we tie ourselves up in knots with man's regulations. There is a liberty. There is a liberty, for example, in the concern of birth control.

Birth control, some are very strong that there should not be such thing. It's an area where there should be liberty. An area where there should be a liberty of conscience, a liberty of preference that the Lord puts on us how we are to address such things.

The area of dress code. You can see I adopt a very casual dress code. It's my preference to dress this way. I would not condemn another who chooses to dress in a more casual way.

Mind you, as a church, when people serve, we do have an expectation of dress code. But as far as attending and fellowshiping, we don't impose a dress code or dictate a dress code on others.

The area of divorce and remarriage. There's various viewpoints on that matter amongst Christians. It's an area where there is liberty. Of course, the word says certain things which we must stick with and adhere to.

[5:02] But there is an area of liberty in this matter. In the question of military service or of going to war, Christians differ on that. Some are pacifists, some are not.

In the area of Christmas and Easter. Some take a particular view and some have not got that view. It's an area of liberty.

In the question of following Hebrew feasts and practices. It's an area where there is liberty.

Christians differ on these matters. In the area of political affiliations.

I can't think for the life of me why a Christian would vote Labor. But that's a matter of personal preference. That's a matter of personal conscience. Amen? I won't condemn you if you vote Labor. If I do, I'll be very worried about you. God forbid that you vote the Greens. Brother Don? Oh, okay. There you go.

[5:56] So talk to Don about that if you've got that persuasion. These are different areas where the Christians differ amongst themselves. I won't have a fight with Don about that. Amen?

I still love you, brother. There is a liberty in Christ over such matters. There is a liberty, brother. A liberty, sister. Over the question of the length of women's hair. Certain churches have got certain expectations or put things on people as far as that.

About men wearing beards. You can see what the expectation is here in this church. Men wearing beards. It makes us look more spiritual. But, you know, in certain churches in America, you know, I would not qualify because my beard is too short.

You know, in certain Mennonite churches and so on. These are questions of conscience, of questions of liberty. Whether a Christian should use Facebook or not. Certain Christians have got views about that.

About how a church government should be set up within a church framework. Certain churches have got rules about ties. Now, they won't allow someone, a man to minister without wearing a tie.

[7:05] Or even a jacket. As expected or such like. Mind you, in some churches in America, I've heard it said that they say ties are wrong and evil.

And you get told off for wearing a tie. Because it's a kind of a showy thing. And something that's unnecessary. So some churches in America will condemn you if you wear a tie.

These are matters of liberty, brother and sister. Matters of liberty. Thank God we don't have to tie ourselves up in knots. The Christian life is meant to be the opposite of bondage.

The opposite of bondage. Liberty contrasts with bondage. And Christ brings us liberty. He brings us liberty. He gives us true freedom. In questions of conscience.

In questions of preference. Whether it's matters of music and such like. Whilst as a church, we would set certain standards as a church. That because we want to honour the Lord, we will set a high standard in certain areas.

[8:03] But we will not condemn a brother or a sister who will take a different view on some of these questions. Because there is freedom in Christ. He grants true liberty to the captives there.

And that is made possible by His blood. He set us free from the entanglement of sin and corruption. As we read in Romans 8 verse 21. He's delivered us from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

And as a saved person, think how great a liberty we have. Our sin debt has been paid. Our burdens have been lifted. Our Father grants us a genuine freedom.

And it's a spiritual truth that we can operate in. That sphere of liberty. That sphere of liberty. As it says in 2 Corinthians 3 verse 17. Now where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

And this liberty that we can know personally is the opposite of bondage. The opposite of man-made religion, of rules and regulations. The pastor is not meant to be a dictator over people's lives.

[9:10] Some churches like that. You know, you've got to phone the pastor up and ask them, Can I marry this person or what not? Or can I go to such and such a place and do such and such a thing?

God's not in that. There's a liberty in Christ. There's the law of liberty. The word of God. We need to take it as rent and let it decide those decisions of life that we choose to have and make those preferences that we can set in accord with his word.

As God helping us gives us that guidance too. And yet it goes on. It says, Yet use not this liberty as an occasion to the flesh. Don't use the liberty that you have in Christ to an occasion to satisfy the selfish ways, the ways of vanity, of hypocrisy.

Let it be a liberty that prompts godliness. That you want to serve him. You want to love him. You want to please him. And that liberty that sets us free from guilt, from the penalty, from the power and the shame of sin.

That freedom that we have. Freedom to walk as would be pleasing to him. To have the freedom from condemnation. That freedom to worship God with joy and praise.

[10:31] That freedom to approach the throne of grace boldly. So I urge you Christian brother to come into this grace, this liberty in Christ. This total freedom that we have.

That brings a wonderful release from any religious bondage. And it's about finding that scriptural balance. I read this little prayer that someone prayed. It talks about balance.

Oh Lord help me to be firm but not harsh. Pure but not proud. Teachable but not gullible.

Kind but not compromising. Decisive but not stubborn. Decisive but not stubborn. Precise but not picky. Simple but not foolish.

Thorough but not unkind. Human but not worldly. Spiritual but not impractical. Generous but not irresponsible.

[11:30] Enthusiastic but not hyper. Hyper. Honest but not brutal.

Spontaneous but not inconsistent.

Lord I guess I'm asking you to help me become a balanced person. Amen. Amen. We can learn from that. There's extremes in many camps. And some people tie themselves up in a yoke.

Mind you there is a yoke. A yoke that we can willingly take. Our Lord grants to us to harness with him. In service. In glad service.

It's not a yoke of bondage. So there is a law to guide us. It's the law of liberty. There's a law of liberty in Christ. There's a freedom in Christ. That we don't have to be all cookie cutter.

Everyone looking the same. And thinking exactly the same. On all manner of questions. But there is a true balance that we can find. That is set by the perfect law of liberty.

[12:26] And in that liberty we can know a rest. We can know a freedom. We can know a release in Christ. A second law that we note in this reading.

Is the law of love. The law of love.

For brethren you have been called unto liberty. Only use not liberty as an occasion to the flesh. But by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word.

Even in this. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if you bite and devour one another. Take heed that you be not consumed one of another.

Romans 3.10. Paul says similarly. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

And James along the same lines. Says in James 2 verse 8. Of this law of love. He calls it the royal law. The royal law. It says in James 2 verse 8.

[13:25] If you fulfil the royal law. According to the scripture. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Ye do well. So James accords with Paul. On this matter.

This law. This law of love. This royal law. Is to love your neighbour as yourself. What does this look like? What is this love? It's about human relationships.

It's talking about how he can get along with one another. How he gets along with fellow human beings. Sadly some Christians miss this.

They miss this. And we see sometimes better conduct from the world. I see better behaviour from my colleagues at work. Who do not follow the saviour. Some of them.

We see better behaviour from worldly people. And some Christians could use some training in this area. In how to get along with one another.

[14:24] Amen. Shouldn't we want to get along with one another? I read a track once that was called Cannibal Christians. Cannibal Christians. It's talking about this text here.

Biting and devouring one another. God forbid. That you get to church and someone wants a piece of you. Wants to chew your ear. For some church people.

Their favourite pastime is cannibalism. Cannibalism. Verbal, spiritual cannibalism. They come to church and they want to have a go.

Or more so. After church. They have the pastor for lunch or somebody else. They behave like wild animals. And worse than the footy players on the pitch.

Worse than the boxes in the ring. They want to devour and destroy. Fellowship. Behaving like wild animals. Church should not be like that.

[15:22] Amen. I'm not saying for you that it is. But I've seen some signs of that. And it concerns me deeply. That there should not be a murmuring.

And a squabbling. And a bat biting amongst Christians. Wanting to nibble away at people. Sowing discord. Gossip. Destructive criticism. These things ought not to be.

Brothers and sisters. It's an unpleasant habit. Surely it's an unpleasant habit. To engage yourself in eating people. By causing division. By nitpicking.

And contention. It's as if some. I read this lately. It's as if some think there is actually a spiritual gift. Of criticism. It's a fact.

It's almost as if some would think such. We must be guarded against that. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. Unteachable people. Not eating. But dividing.

[16:18] And causing division and confusion. Bent on character assassination. In warfare they call it friendly fire. How sad. That an

army. Of God's soldiers. Should be attacking its own men. And hurting even the wounded. Whose army are you fighting for? Really it's pride. And selfishness at work.

And there's great harm done. I'm not talking about necessary marking. And rebuking. And admonishing. There's a place for that. There is a place for that. For discipline.

For biblical discipline. Where a brother errs. In false doctrine. I'm not saying not to correct. In fact we must. We must bring loving instruction. And speak out in love.

It's not to say that we do not name false brethren. Where necessary. But this is talking in our dealings with fellow men. And something that the world has these common courtesies.

[17:15] And Christians who are indignant and self-possessed can lack. We're called to love one another. Love one another. Not eat one another. Christians are not meant to be biting and devouring one another.

It says love is the fulfilment of the law. So there's a danger. I just want to urge today a caution of that lack of grace. Of that vital truth of lacking love.

Of missing that vital element. As someone has put it. When Christians can let small disagreements become major issues. When we bicker and quarrel. We inevitably harm the cause of Christ.

Our bitter arguments eventually can become more important than our Lord. And this is what I read. Of such arguments they create confusion. They put an end to Christian peace.

They destroy the work of God. They cause the church to turn inward. They turn new believers away. They dishonour our Lord. They grieve his Holy Spirit. They stir up sinful tendencies.

[18:14] They cause weak Christians to stumble. They force people to take sides on things that are not commanded. And they enter the testimony of the church. They confirm to sceptics that the church is full of hypocrites.

They cause the enemies of the gospel to rejoice. They send the message to the world. God loves you. But we hate each other. And in the end we destroy the church of God.

By hatred and envy. Power plays and vicious words. These things harm God's church. When we act like wild beasts. And this is what Paul was speaking about here.

I'm not saying this church is like that. I'm issuing a word to exhort us to be alert to such things. We don't want that in this place where there's self-destructive and unchristian behaviour.

So as a church we want to steer ourselves together in this fellowship. In that direction of God's love. Of not strife and division.

[19:13] But of God's love. In Galatians 5 it says, Paul writes of faith which worketh by love. They're linked. Faith works by love. And he says, By love serve one another.

So we see here the perfect law of liberty. There's a wonderful liberty in Christ. You can have your political views that are different from mine. You can have your views about all manner of subjects under the sun that are different from mine.

I don't dictate my views to you. There is a law of liberty that's within the bounds of what the scriptures say. There's a royal law of love that we read.

Of loving one another. And thirdly there's the law of the spirit of life. The law of the spirit of life. The third law we see. We could infer from verse 16.

This I say then. Walk in the spirit. And ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. Goes on verse 18. But if ye be led by the spirit.

[20:12] Ye are not under the law. Romans 8.2 Paul describes it as the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Has made me free from the law of sin and death.

So there's a sense where the spirit leads. And we walk in the spirit. What does that mean? It's a phrase we can glibly use isn't it? And it's like some would glibly say.

The spirit of God led me to do this and do that. To such and such. God told me this and God told me that. I had this dream. I had this wonderful goose bump experience.

And it must have been the Holy Spirit telling me to do something. And then they go. They make it a doctrine. Because of their own experience. It's almost like some cop out throw away kind of phrase. God's told me this or I've experienced that. So it must be right. And people will justify their own unwillingness. To submit to godly fellowship by such things.

[21:15] Friends it's vitally critical that we test the spirits. We must test the spirits. Try the spirits. See what is truly leading us. Is it the spirit of God?

The Holy Spirit will not lead us contrary to the Holy Scriptures. We do not rest on our experiences. This is a great danger. Especially in modern day Christendom today.

Where someone gets an experience and they make a doctrine out of it. Or they won't see that it doesn't line up. We must not trust our feelings or follow our heart.

We must instead follow the spirit. How do we follow the spirit? The spirit follows the word. The spirit follows the word. We make an error if we say we're led by the spirit.

And it's not in accordance with the scriptures. This must be our foundation. This must be what leads and dictates what's right and wrong. Because the Bible does talk of two spirits.

[22:15] The spirit of truth. And the spirit of error. It must be the spirit of the word of God that we follow. The word of God tells us what God's Holy Spirit tells us to do.

Not by supposed visions or personal prophecies or latter day revelations. We must be led by the spirit of truth. And to know such is to line it up with the word of God.

This will help us to understand. This is the best protection from deception. The word of God. And there's much warning in the word about spiritual deception in the last days.

So we must be careful to not misplace our faith in anything but the truth of the scriptures. Don't swallow the poison. But rather discern deception.

The Holy Spirit will not lead us contrary to the Holy Scriptures. How do we know what it is that the Spirit is saying?

[23:18] We must read the Bible. We must study the Bible. To show ourselves approved unto God. 2 Timothy 2.15 He that hath an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

This is what the Spirit says unto the churches. It's in this book. It's in our hands. So be led by the Spirit. It's the opposite of the flesh. How will the Holy Spirit lead you?

He will draw you closer to Christ. He will glorify Christ in your life. And He will equip you to be a witness for Christ. If we live in the Spirit. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Make it your daily walk. So we seek, friends, to close three spiritual laws. Three spiritual principles that will guard us from discord.

Three spiritual principles that will help us to walk in God's truth. Two, the perfect law of liberty. The perfect law of liberty.

[24:19] That there is liberty. Secondly, the royal law of love. That we will love one another.

We won't bite and devour one another. And thirdly, the law of the Spirit of life. That will be led by the Spirit. Truly led by the Spirit. The Spirit of God, who is the Spirit of the Word.

And what wonderful blessing can happen when we do this. What blessing? The blessing of liberty that we don't have to all conform to one another.

There's one that we have to conform to. Amen? There's one that we have to conform to. The Lord Jesus. There's liberty in Christ. There's love in Christ that we can love one another.

That we can overlook our faults. Please, please do that with me, I pray. Overlook one another's faults. Forbear one another in love. Don't make a fuss about things that don't really matter.

[25:26] Love one another. And thirdly, be led by the Spirit. Be led individually and be led corporately by the Spirit. Not by some spooky goosebumps or some experience that you had one day.

Some revelation. But be led by the Spirit. Who will not lead you contrary to His Word. That's what matters. That's what matters. Friends, let's pray.